

BROADWAY IN THE MIDDLE AGES



SPITZ PUPS



LIGHTNING CALCULATOR



INTERIOR OF A BROADWAY STAGE



A FLOWER GIRL



ANIMATED SANDWICHES

The Bronze Angel

By GUSTAVE HELENE WITTE

The story which follows, by Frau (or is it Fraulein?) Gustave Helene Witte, couples genuine imaginative quality with marked technical skill. It has the high merit—perhaps the highest merit that a short story can have—of creating a spacious atmosphere, of suggesting ideas which transcend its own limitations in the way of form and content.

The symbolism of the bronze angel is such an idea. It dominates the story and gives it an artistic unity. The bronze figure gets actually into the war at last only by going into the Munitions Department's melting pot. But the story whose development it determines is none the less a war story, constructed against a war background and truly reflecting the internal as well as the external reactions of the war.

IT WAS a century-old house up in the Harz Mountains in which the bronze angel spread his shining, gilded wings and smilingly looked down on the human beings at his feet. In his rounded, upstretched arms he held high two sets of candle sockets, from which beautifully cut pendants of crystal hung, and in which perfumed, yellowish wax candles stood.

The sunbeams often stole through the ivy-bordered windows, lovingly stroked with their warm fingers the angel's wings and body, played about his curly head and drew dancing rainbow colors out of the crystals of the candle sockets. The mellow light scurried up and down the brown, wainscoted walls, so that sometimes it seemed as if flames from the candles fluttered up and flared from side to side. Yet they had never burned—those perfumed, yellowish wax candles.

Thoughtfully Regina looked up from her sewing to the angel, who smiled down at her: "When will your candles burn? Will it ever happen? Will it happen soon?"

Her heart beat faster. A warm glow rose to her fresh, youthful face. She went to the piano and let her fingers move softly across the keys. Her voice sounded like a peal of jubilation through the sombre room.

"Und der Bach, die Bäume sagen's. Und es rauscht's der Wind im Hain. Und die Nachtigallen schlagen's: Sie ist deine, sie ist dein."

"Regina, why do you sing that song, that particular song?"

It was a weary voice—the voice of a woman—which interrupted the secret outpouring of the heart of youth. The tall, thin figure of Regina's mother, never dressed in anything but the deepest black, glided like a shadow through the room.

"Pardon me, mother—I didn't think." And Regina closed the piano and went back to her work.

"Yes, to forget—that is the right of youth," came the embittered answer, as the dark figure vanished through the door.

Regina made no reply. But her glance stole up again to the angel, as if in friendly greeting. Outside the reddish gold of the setting sun illuminated the crowns of the old trees, from whose shadow the brooklets dashed joyfully toward the valley below. The herd jogged slowly down the mountain paths, the tinkling of its bells came softly through the evening calm and the brown bodies of the cows stood out picturesquely against the background of green.

Regina gazed with delight at the familiar picture. She rejoiced, too, in the stalwart figures of the men in field gray who followed the herd—in their freshness, their firm tread and their cheerful voices. She rejoiced that, coming here for after-cure and recreation, often after cruel suffering, they had found again in the tonic air of the Harz their old buoyancy and strength. Here in the peace of the mountains they had seen their wounds heal and their spirits recover from the shock and terror of war. Here they had won back tranquillity of soul, and eyes in which horror had once been reflected could now feast freely and quietly on nature's beauty.

Regina saw all this and rejoiced in it, for her helping hand and her friendly speech had also had a share in the work of recovery. Nevertheless a shadow lay on her face—a

shadow caused by her mother's words—and it did not lift even when Captain Heinzius—the wounded officer whom they had accepted as a guest—stepped up to her at the window and cordially shook her hand. His eyes shone as he greeted her—and with reason, for in her house he had learned in six long, wonderful weeks to look again cheerfully and courageously at life, even though his shattered left arm had cut him off from any further chance of active army service.

"I thought you were still over at the pastor's house discussing arrangements for our concert," she said, smiling.

And with a smile in return he answered, in the words of Bajazzo: "Your singing captivated me."

A dark glow spread over Regina's face and she asked hastily:

"Have you settled the order of the pieces?"

He nodded eagerly and released her hand. "Yes, here it is: Introductory organ number; singing by the church choir; prelude with the harp; 'Ave Maria'; Regina Wolter; singing by the church choir; a cello piece; then Regina Wolter again; an organ number to end with. Is that all right?"

"Certainly. I have offered to do whatever I can."

"And that will be something splendid," he said enthusiastically. "But there is one thing more. There is very little light in the old church. Where you, the singer, stand, there ought to be some illumination. So I have an idea—a request to make which you in your goodness will surely not deny. You have here a wonderful work of art—the bronze angel. It is just as if he had been moulded, in his pure beauty, for some ancient church. If you would lend him for the evenings, he would fit splendidly into the situation. It will not be much trouble; the next morning he will be brought back. I can see already how beautiful it will be when his candles are lighted."

He had become very much interested and his beaming eyes were fixed on the angel's figure, which now shone dimly out of the half-darkness. Only when the silence remained unbroken and no answer came did he turn again to Regina. She leaned against the window frame, her hands clasped together, and her gaze, like his, was fixed on the angel. There was something burning in her look—a deep, fierce longing. But she shook her head and said softly:

"No, that will never do. He cannot shed his light—not yet."

There was a gleam in her eyes, a smile on her lips.

"His candles have never been lighted," she added.

He looked at her curiously.

"All the more reason, then, Fraulein Regina," he answered. "Could there be a nobler dedication than the one which would be made to-night?"

"Yes; for him there could be," she replied. And again there was a note of jubilation in her voice.

"What do you mean? What is the mystery about this angel? Tell me, please."

She nodded assent.

"He is an heirloom, handed down from generation to generation—not in the same family, but by friend to friend. Once he was given to a young girl with the blessing and the injunction, 'May he bring you good fortune! When once good fortune comes to you—real, great, God-given good fortune, that which the heart dreams of as the most precious thing on earth—then you must light the angel's candles. Before that you must not light them.'"

"So the candle-bearer went from the hands of one friend into the hands of another. Fortune has touched with its golden wings many a one of his possessors. From a dear friend he came to me. But since I have had him his candles have never burned."

"Regina, some time he will shine—he must shine. Some time his magic will work for you, who hold so much good fortune for others in your hands."

"Regina, where are you? It is time to go into the kitchen."

The mother's voice rang through the room



THE TOY WOMAN

These are not people of old New York, nor are they modern folk. They are illustrations to an article, "Life on Broadway," which appeared in Harper's Monthly for January, 1878. Such characters as are shown were well known types on the Broadway of four decades ago. The gentlemen on the extreme right did the publicity work for Kate Claxton.

and broke the spell whose power each of them felt. The man, who had bent over toward her, straightened himself up. Her strangely moved voice became mute. He merely pressed her hand once more. Then she disappeared in the depths of the room.

The century-old church on the Schlossberg was filled that night to the doors. The candles in their iron sockets on the gray walls threw an uncertain, flickering light on the richly carved altar of age-darkened oak, on the dove which hung over the chancel, on pictures from long vanished times and on the many, many men and women in the seats in the body of the church and the choir.

The gold-colored square of silk forming a background for the altar behind the crucifix shimmered like the sun when the light broke through it, and a wonderful woman's voice, soft and full of feeling, floated out through the vaulted space over the audience.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

The voice stirred the congregation, which had come to the concert each one to give his mite for the relief of the men who out there in the field were suffering so many privations and hardships.

Kurt Heinzius looked up to the dim organ choir, where Regina was singing. He did not see her. But her tones moved his heart, as her whole personality had long moved it, and it seemed to him that he could see the angel's candles brightly burning—a symbol of happiness for Regina and for himself. It seemed to him as if his own hand had been chosen to light them for the first time. He gave a start as the last note died away and the organ began to play the closing number.

Side by side with Regina and her mother he walked up the valley to their house. To the left a little stream ran and the night wind sang in the tops of the ancient trees. Captain Heinzius had silently pressed Regina's hand and she had understood.

"And have not love"—he repeated the text and saw in the blue light of the summer night a radiance in Regina's eyes and a smile upon her lips.

"Love—it ought to be able to overcome much—nay, everything—in life. Yet there are chasms which even it cannot bridge."

Thus spoke Frau Wolter, harshly and bitterly, and the smile on Regina's face vanished.

"I know of only one such chasm," he answered, quickly. "A chasm into which one casts his honor—that love could never bridge."

A dry laugh was Frau Wolter's answer.

"Yes, that is life," she added.

"I don't know," said Regina softly; "there may be a love which pardons even that."

"No," replied Kurt Heinzius emphatically. "No, never. Like two saints, they go through the world in those times and stretch their

hands out to each other—Love and Honor. Everything great and splendid that happens happens through them. One without the other is powerless. Of all the precious things on this earth honor stands first. It must remain pure and spotless. A blot on the honor of my house or my family would be to me deadly poison, killing all my enjoyment of life. And in such a case love would never help me out—never."

They had reached the house, and when the friendly lamplight illuminated the room he was startled by what he saw in Regina's face. It was ashy and haggard and the expressionless eyes stared into vacancy.

"Regina, what's the matter?" he asked, anxiously. "Was the excitement of singing too much for you?"

She shook her head.

"Nothing's the matter. I will go and get some refreshments."

"No; don't. I will go myself."

And Frau Wolter pushed Regina back from the door and went out.

Regina leaned on the table, her head bowed. Her arms dropped limply at her side and over there, towering above her, stood the man who had taken away her soul, whose heart fought against hers. Only an hour ago she had believed in her fortune—in a great, solemn, enrapturing happiness. And now?

"A blot upon the honor of my house would be to me a deadly poison, killing all my enjoyment of life."

She heard the words again and again. Now she knew what must happen. Was there no merciful power which would spare her those minutes, those bitterest minutes?

In helpless fear her glance flew unwillingly to the angel. Kurt's eyes had followed hers. Suddenly he stood beside her and his hot hands clasped her cold, trembling fingers. His voice sounded close to her ear, which was almost stopped by her heartbeats.

"Regina, I can't put what I want to say into words. You know how deep into my heart you have grown, with your goodness and your charm. You know that life would be cheerless for me without you—that I love you very, very dearly. Let me light the angel's candles, for you and for me."

But she drew back. With big, horrified eyes she stared at him, as she took her hands out of his. Then she slowly shook her head:

"No; it cannot—it must not be. It can never be."

Her voice was now clear and calm.

"Regina!"

She raised her hand protestingly.

"Never! Don't ask me why! It cannot be. With that she left the room. He was alone. He stared after her—after her who no longer seemed the same to him, from whom all tenderness and goodness had been stripped and nothing remained but offishness and self-will. What was the matter? That was the question

Something Novel in War Stories

Translated, with Introductory Comment, by William L. McPherson

burning in his heart and throbbing in his brain.

Kurt knew that Regina's words, "Don't ask me," barred the way to an answer; for in her eyes there was an expression which said: "Don't ask me if you love me." He did love her; therefore he submitted and was silent. But in his soul wrath, sympathy, love and resentment fought with one another for the mastery.

Full of bitterness, he left the house in which he thought he had found happiness. Full of bitterness because of this thought: "She does not love me in the way in which I longed to have her love me, for she has no confidence."

For months Kurt Heinzius had been in Berlin, where he had found something to do in the captured material department of the War Ministry. He had not spoken with Regina alone since that evening, for on the following morning a telegram had called him to his new post in the capital.

Yet he could never forget the time he had spent in the Harz village. Again and again the old house stood before his eyes, with its ivy-covered gable, its high-ceilinged rooms and the antique furniture in them. Again he saw his two hostesses—the older one, who seemed to bear a secret burden on her wearied shoulders, in whose eyes there was a hard gleam, the expression of a soul which had done with hopes and wishes; and the younger one, who glided through the house like sunshine and with her art brought beauty and joy into its sombre interior.

He should not have submitted. He should have asked; he should have demanded an explanation. She owed it to him. One does not refuse so abruptly, so unreasonably, a man's heart and hand. That is insulting; that is—

"Look out! Look out! You're running over us," said an irritated voice, interrupting his thoughts and checking his reckless, absent-minded stride. He excused himself and looked about him with bewildered eyes, coming back from another world into the world of actuality.

Some people stood there with a big basket full of brass and copper ware.

"We are carrying this to the market hall, to the military delivery station," they said. "But there is a great crowd. We get numbers and must wait our turn. Often it is hours before we get to the delivery desk. See how many there are behind us."

"It is fine of you to give what you can spare. One can be proud to belong to a people which is ready to make sacrifices without a thought where the Fatherland is concerned."

Now he went himself into the market hall. He wanted to see the delivery station. And as he looked at the masses of copper kettles and of brass and nickel ware his attention was attracted by something glistening which he certainly had never expected to see there.

Gilded wings were spread out, a curly head looked down and short, round arms held up two sets of candle sockets. It was the bronze angel from the quiet house in the Harz Mountains. It was he without a doubt.

He stood there and stared and stared. His thoughts galloped, his heart beat violently. Would the candles in those sockets never burn? A number was called; the angel was carried to the front.

"A bronze candelabrum," cried a voice to the waiting crowd, and through the mass pushed a slender figure, dressed in deepest black. The blond hair glistened under the thin texture of the black veil.

Yes, he knew her, too—Regina.

His heart rose in his throat. He saw distinctly how her delicate hand singled a transfer paper, how she refused with a shake of the head any payment for her gift and then turned to go. Almost reverently the people stood aside for her as, with the air of distinction which was so natural to her, she made her way out.

He rushed to meet her eagerly, impulsively. Now he must speak to her. He must.

"Regina! Fraulein Wolter, don't you know me?"

She gave a start. A soft glow rose in her cheeks and her eyes shone with the same radi-

ance which had so often filled him with happiness.

"I am glad to see you," she said cordially and offered him her hand.

Side by side they walked into the open where the autumn sun shone brilliantly and warmly.

"You are in mourning, Fraulein Regina. Your mother?" he said hesitatingly.

"No," she answered, shaking her head. "My brother has fallen on the field of honor."

"Your brother? You had a brother?" he asked in astonishment.

She looked past him, up into the blue heaven, and on her face there was an expression, half of sorrow, half of deliverance. She made no answer. He could not resist questioning her further. An irresistible impulse spurred him on.

"And you have offered the angel, that splendid work of art, that symbol of fortune, whose candles have never burned?"

She breathed deeply.

"They have burned," she replied.

Tears glistened in her eyes, which were turned toward him. But it seemed to him, if something snapped in his heart, as if a golden hope had faded out.

"They have burned? Have they burned? Happiness? When and where?"

He poured out these questions—questions which he had no right to ask.

"Three days ago at my brother's bier," she said softly.

"Regina, and that—and that?"—he failed him. He stared at her in amazement.

"Yes, that was a good fortune—the great—that they could ever burn for," she answered.

"I don't understand you."

"I will tell you. But not here."

They walked over to the Tiergarten. The paths around the ponds were empty.

"Regina, tell me."

"Yes, you shall know, so that you will not misjudge me."

Again a glow came into her face. Then she began:

"I had a brother. Karl was his name. It was our joy and pride. But he was frightened. He fell into evil ways. He did evil things. He deceived us, committed forgery. We could not help him, and he had to leave the country to avoid imprisonment. He was dead as far as we were concerned, blotted out of our life."

"The war and Germany's need aroused him. He came back from America. The old wound drew him home. He must return to Germany. By roundabout ways he succeeded. A few days after you went away he returned and entered the army."

"I will make good," he said. "What I have done to you. I will atone to the Fatherland!"

"He washed out with his blood the offense of which he had been guilty. He fell, and in the deed which brought him death he saved hundreds of precious lives. By his coffin the bronze angel's candles were lighted."

"It was the greatest good fortune which he could celebrate—to see one who had been disgraced again restored to honor through death for the Fatherland. It was a good fortune which brought peace to us all."

"After that I felt that my angel's candles ought never to burn again. They have already had their highest dedication."

"Regina!"

Deeply affected, he kissed the girl's slender hand and then drew it under his arm.

"I thank you, Regina."

Again he recalled the hour in which he had wooed her. Again he heard the words, "It can never be."

"That was the reason, Regina, why you rejected me. That was the reason, wasn't it?"

She nodded assent.

"Yes, the stain on our honor which I dare not transmit to you, because—"

She halted, then fixed her eyes on his.

"Because I loved you too much—for much—to do that."

He took her in his arms and kissed her.

"My darling, you are right. It was good fortune which the angel's candles lighted—good fortune for me, too. We must celebrate—good fortune for me, too. We must him no longer. Now happiness burns in flame—and for all time—in our hearts."